

## Conversation with 24 year old black male, Washington, DC (Transcription)

0032 p.4

START 59 (5)

FW What did you feed them? How did you keep them alive? How long could you keep them alive?

INF You can keep them alive a long time. All you have to do is feed them insects, mice, any small animal you know.

FW Did you feed them mice alive or dead?

INF Alive.

FW What was that like?

INF Well, what it is, you know, they eat the mouse. They just lay there 'til the food digested. The whole body.

FW Did the mice ever fight back?

## Library of Congress

INF No. They tried their best to get away though.

FW Did you use to watch?

INF We used to watch them very very closealy, you know, and you actually can see as the mouse you know as he's digesting the mouse, the way his skin moves and everything and within about one or two days the mouse is gone.

FW He didn't have to eat too often at that rate.

INF No, they didn't. But when they did they ate alot.

FW Swallow them whole?

INF Yup. Swallow them whole. They didn't believe in biting off some and saving some for later.

FW Put it in the refrigrerator.

INF No...

FW How about the dog. what kind of dog was that?

INF Well the dog I had, I had more than one breed of dog, each dog I had was a pedigreed dog except for one I had, was a mixed breed, but I found out of all the dogs I had, the

## Library of Congress

mixed breed was the best one. Easier to train for one thing. And then if we let them out and went out of town he took care of himself. Oh we called him Keno. K-e-n-o. And so ah to me he was a

#0032, p.5

beautiful dog. He was a mixed breed with German Shepard and boxer and he was trained to baby sit little kids cross the street up by the light, he would open the door or ring the doorbell. And so he was very well trained because we had him for five years before he caught distemper and we had to put him away. And I thought more of him than I did any dog.

FW That's pretty smart for a dog to do all that.

INF Be even worked for his livin' while he was livin'..

FW Oh really?

INF He was a watch dog for a gas station at night. It sounds incredible but it really was true, though. If you could see the owner of the gas station he would tell you the same thing. And when that dog was there you <unintelligible text> allowed to go inside at all.

FW Was he a big dog?

INF Yeah, he was very large. I don't care to much for a small dog. I like a larger dog for this reason, if they don't bite <unintelligible text> scare the devil off somebody

## Library of Congress

<unintelligible text>. Give them the impression that they will bite, You know, it's a lot of protection. But, a smaller dog, they're so small. Just can't have no fun with them.

FW I agree with you.

INF Yeah, because if you start wrestling with them you might hurt them, you know. That's the only thing about it.

FW Do you think Kino would have bit somebody if he tried to rob the gas station?/

INF I know he would have. I know there's a <unintelligible text>. He was the type of dog, like if he knew someone and you tell him to <unintelligible text> go with you somewhere, he'll go with you and he will protect you. If someone try to bother you he'll watch out for you you know.because he was trained very well. 'Cause I spend all my time with him. I didn't go to parties or nothing like that.

#0031 p.6

FW How did you go about training him?

INF Well, I started out when he was a puppy, you know, housebreaking him and then after that when I'd start <gap> around the front door you know and watch very closely and put his foot up on his paw up, you know try and get him up there to reach the doorbell. As he got larger he was able to reach it you know. After he was able to reach it I stopped pushing it with the paw. Every time he pushed the doorbell we opened the door from the otherside so it got so he was in the habit, you know, when he wanted to get in, he'd ring the doorbell. We'd go and answer it. And then if the door was unlocked you know, he could turn the

## Library of Congress

doorknob with his mouth to come in. He he was easy to train, but I tell you like a pedigreed dog, they're a little difficult. Yeah, they say they're easier but They're not. The pedigree dog <unintelligible text> take care of themselves. ( <gap> ).

FW What else was he trained to do?

INF He was trained to kill.

FW Really.

INF Yeah.

FW Did you do that?

INF Yes, I did. Because around the area where I was living at, everyone had a dog that was trained to kill. And most of the boys use to put their dogs up to fight each other. Make bets. And so after I had him. First time I <unintelligible text> it scared me half to death because I thought he couldn't fight, you know, but ended up this man's dog -- he had a boxer and he sicked his dog on Kino. I thought for sure the dog was going to kill Kino, but the other dog didn't because Kino got to his throat first. But I ended up making him let him go <unintelligible text> before he killed him. But mostly I was scared half to death. And then I didn't have no trouble out of that guy no more.

#0032 p.7

## Library of Congress

INF Then Kino kind of got a name for himself behind that, you know. 'Cause guys used to come around seeking for him, you know, bring their dogs around, sick their dogs on him. But he took care of h'self pretty well.

FW Well, how would you train a dog -- I mean you couldn't let him practise on anybody.

INF No you couldn't. All you do is get a dummy, that's all. And keep telling him attack, but you can use yourself for a target, you know, put your arm up. Show him some of the ways that a person would be mean to him because a dog <gap> that will hurt him. And then he'll know that -- attack your arm or go for your throat or anything and then after you get him used to a command. You just get a dummy <unintelligible text> up and say attack and constantly keep pushing that in his mind. He get what you mean.

FW He'll get so he'll go for the dummy.

INF Yeah, although a lot of people had different ways of training their dog. Like some of the guys, what they did, they gave the dog gun powder. Some of the guys beat their dogs to make them mean and which I think is wrong because it's cruelty to the animal and the dog didn't know any better. Just to go and <gap> a man. But I -- yeah, I never have beat him. Except for my mother used to spank him cause he had a bad habit of pulling clothes off the line and whenever he pulled clothes off the line, he know he did wrong. So the first thing he did was ran. Because he know she was going to get next to him. 'cept for one day she caught up with him, you know, and she put his head between her legs and spanked him and after that he didn't do it no more.

FW That was enough. We had a dog that couldn't do all that stuff.

## Library of Congress

INF You got to really spend time with them. All your time. And you have to show the dog that you really love him, you know. And after the dog

#0032 p.8

realizes that he'll do anything for you.

FW Next dog.

INF Pardon?

FW Next dog I get I'm going to try and work with him. Then you have a valuable animal.

INF Yeah. You have an animal that will take care of you. Because I have a dog right now, a German shepherd, but do to the fact I live in an apartment my cousin have to keep it. <gap> I don't know. I think Wesley has seen my dog. because what happened I brought it down here to the office. She's okay, you can come up to her and pet her, talk to her, play with her, but when you're in the apartment, you can go in the kitchen, you can walk around the living room, but don't go near the bedroom. because she will get you you know. And Then don't touch the baby or my wife at all. Only way you can touch the baby if we give you the baby. Then you can't rock the baby or nothing like that. 'cause so she'll attack you. And then if I have her in car, don't come near the car at all. I have to get out of the car and see you. And so she's pretty well trained.

FW Did you work with her here yourself --

## Library of Congress

INF Yeah. I worked with her for mostly. Then, now my cousin have her. He work with her now. Because she's getting to be a little to viscious towards everyone you know and then when we went different places no one is allowed to walk close to us at all. Which is very bad for her.

FW I guess they can go too far.

INF Yeah.

FW What did you study when you were in elementary school?

INF Well, when I was in elementary school I had a lot of math when I was in class. Which that's one of the things I majored in...was math, art and English grammar, you know, and then we had history. The basic things that you

#0032 p.9

study in school you know.

FW What about in high school?

INF Senior high or junior high?

FW Senior high.



## Library of Congress

INF Well, senior high I had mostly business subjects. 'Cause mostly office work, /and then I had a little typing, then I had a little bit of everything. Then I had mostly art because they let you sign up for some of your classes at the school I was attending at the time and so the classes that I picked was math all the way to trigonometry. You know I just got a touch of that and then I had commercial art and interior decoration / <gap> because those were the main things I was interested in. And then one of the things you take in high school whether you want to take it or not was Cadets. Yeah, they get you ready for the military service, you know which is good. So some of the guys in there know something what it's like but still it's a little rough when you get in there, you know.

FW Have you ever been in?

INF No.

FW What do the kids do after school is out? In elementary school, say.

INF Elementary and junior high? Well, what I did when I went to elementary -- I must speak for myself -- I can't speak for anyone else. What we used to do, <unintelligible text> go the playground, play for awhile, you know, and if someone else had a record player or something, we used to dance. I had I had to be in the house by eight o'clock in the evening and then behind that I had to do my homework and then the bed. That's elementary. And then when I got to junior high school mostly what I did was party after school, everyday just about. I'd go partying and if I didn't party I had the dog with me. Something like that. But other than that, nothing else. High school I was in -- the whole time I was in high school, I worked, you know, at Tuft's drive in. I didn't get off until about four in the morning. So I

## Library of Congress

#0032 p.10

actually had enough time to get home, do my homework, get a couple hours of sleep, get back to work.

FW Gee, how did you take it?

INF Until about half a semester up in the twelfth grade, then I had to cut loose.

FW When did you go to work?

INF I started working as soon as I went into tenth grade.

Fw I mean what time of the day?

INF Oh I was supposed to be her, four o'clock, but there was no way -- was no way possible for me to make it 'cause I was going to Eastern High School which was over on 17th and East Capital Street and then I had to go all the way out to Arlington, Virginia. <gap> Road and so they let me come in at five, you know. And so I just worked a little later than usual.

FW You worked from five til four the next morning?

INF Yeah.

## Library of Congress

FW Everyday?

INF Yeah.

FW Whew.

INF Well, it was something I wanted to do because for the clothes that I like my father refused to pay the money for them because at the time when I was in high school I liked forty dollar shoes and my father said that was too much to pay for shoes and so I decided to do one thing, work for my money, clothes you know. So that's what I did. At least that way I was clean everyday I went to school and had money in my pocket.

FW That kind of shot your day after school, though.

INF I didn't mind.

FW Was there ever a teacher anywhere in any of the schools you went to that hollered a lot?

#0032 p.11

INF Yes there was. I had a government teacher. She yelled a lot at the kids, but one thing I must say for her, she was a very good teacher 'cause when you walked into that classroom whether you want to or not you learned something one way or the other.

## Library of Congress

But she was one of the teacher's who yelled alot. And then when I was in elementary school I had one teacher and she was hateful. That was in kindergarten, though. And that's one teacher I do rememb er. Her name and everything. I never forget her because she spanked my hands a couple of times and then if you'd raise your hand to go to the bathroom she'd say no. And then if you'd do something in your clothes she'd spand you and send you home to your parents.

FW Sounds like an old witch.

INF She really was.

FW Did you used to think itwas fair, what she punished the kids for?

INF No it wasn't/ It wasn't. She was just evil like that - was a very old lady. And what it is, now that I'm older I see what it was, it was her patience, you know. I don't think she had much patience with the kids at all.

FW <gap>

INF Oh, years ago I thought she was the most hateful <woman?> around. If I'd had a brick she would have got it.

FW I guess if I asked you if you'd ever had a teacher you just couldn't stand, she'd be it.

INF Yes, she'd be the only one because <unintelligible text> other teachers, I got along with them fine. I never had any trouble with my teachers.

## Library of Congress

FW Were you ever in a class where the kids played a trick on the teacher?

INF Yes I was. Several classes. Well, in one of the classes well we had

#0032 p. 12

our thugs in the classroom. And they was kind of smart, but they was thugs, what they used to do, they uh, under the <unintelligible text> teacher's chair in the morning -- they got in there and took it apart and put tacs under there and we had to say after class for a whole week behind that 'cause no one wouldn't tell and then another time was -- someone brought some bees, bumble bees in the room and <unintelligible text> and so the teacher got us about that. But other than that, everything was prettynice. Then we had a few teachers that, one teacher that -- well one teacher that is, in particular, that everyone was really crazy about. And that was one of my home room teachers <gap> was was at <gap> Junior High School. During the time that she was there she did things she had to do and I think at our age we realized that. When we was bad she punished us, when we was good she reward us, you know and the kids thought so much of her that everytime her birthday came she always got a surprise birthday party there at school. Yeah, and gifts. Right to this day now, see alot of kids who went to school with me, they go back to see her now. I even go back every now and then to see her.

END